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DISCUSSION

PREVENTION OF WATER WASTE ON RAILROADS¹

BY C. R. KNOWLES

MR. J. M. DIVEN: In Charleston, S. C., the superintendent of a railway asked the Water Company to repair a number of hydrants in the railroad yards, complaint of their condition having been made by the fire department. The fire department requested very prompt action, as the hydrants were in the cotton yard and cotton yards are very bad risks. The work was promptly done. About a week later a very peremptory message was received wanting to know why the hydrants had not been repaired. The railroad superintendent was told that the repairs had been made promptly. On going over the yard with him it was found that the hydrants had been tampered with after the repairs had been made. The nuts on three or four of them were filed square so that a monkey wrench would fit them. Further investigation disclosed the fact that the firemen and engineers were in the habit of using these hydrants to wash up when they came in from a trip. They would turn the water on at the fire hydrant and make their toilet there instead of at the round house. What the amount of waste was in that way we had no means of ascertaining, because this was fire service and was supplied without meters.

MR. C. R. KNOWLES: The most dangerous form of waste that we have to contend with is in the use of water closets, automatic flush tanks and other services with direct connection to sewers. In this connection we made an investigation of the toilet facilities at one of our terminals where we have something like 180 urinal flush tanks and 290 stools which are equipped with automatic valves flushing direct from the main. In making a survey of the situation it was estimated that we could bring about a saving of at least \$500 per month. Some of the local officers thought it was a crazy state-

¹ Published in June, 1916, JOURNAL, Vol. 3, No. 2, at pp. 356-363.

ment and cheerfully told us so, but at the end of the first month or so the saving proved to be some \$700.

We have recently added a large number of toilet facilities at this point, but close supervision has kept the consumption of water lower even than that with the original installation.

We meter our own supply where it is pumped with our own facilities in some instances where it is desired to correct a waste. Meters are of particular value where we have joint facilities in connection with other railroads. We expect the saving that will be made at one point, where we put on meters, to pay for the meters in a year's time, because the use of the meters cuts down the consumption and keeps it where it should be.